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ABSTRACT

This booklet is a transcription of a program from the radio series, "Options in Education." It is part 2 of a two-part series dealing with sexism in education. It deals with sex discrimination in various aspects of public education, including textbooks, teacher promotion, sports programs and children's literature. There is also a discussion of Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments, which explicitly forbids sex discrimination in education. Interviewees include high school principals, a Board of Education President, textbook company representatives, and the Deputy Director of HEW's office for Civil Rights. A general theme of the program is that curriculum materials are rampant with sexism, and that females have been systematically repressed by sexism just as Blacks have been repressed by racism. (BP)

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

PROGRAM TRANSCRIPTS OF
A WEEKLY SERIES BROADCAST BY
MEMBER STATIONS OF
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Program #88

SEX AND SEXISM IN EDUCATION
Part II

August 22, 1977

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
SEX DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION	1-2
SEX BIAS IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS -- Arvonne Fraser, former director of the Women's Equity Action League; Bernice Sandler, Women's Project of the American Association of Colleges; Clelia Steele, Project on Equal Education Rights for NOW	2-3
WHY THERE ARE FEWER WOMEN PRINCIPALS -- Catherine Derby, principal of Trevillah Elementary School, Montgomery County, Maryland; Dr. Scott Thompson, Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals	3-5
CINDY BROWN TALKS ABOUT TITLE IX -- Cindy Brown, Deputy Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare	6-8
DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS	8
MARYLAND'S NEW POLICY ON SPORTS -- Joseph Shilling, Maryland Deputy Superintendent of Education; Margo Polivy, lawyer representing Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women; David Selvin	9-10
SEXIST ATTITUDES AND THEIR EFFECT ON CHILDREN -- Dr. Alexandra Kaplan, psychologist in Amherst, Massachusetts	11
SEX STEREOTYPING IN NURSERY RHYMES -- Mary Balik, teacher	12-13
MARCIA GUTTENTAG AND UNDOING SEX STEREOTYPES -- Marcia Guttentag, Professor, Harvard University	13-14
NEW CHILDREN'S LITERATURE -- Ann Studivant-Odwarka, owner and director of a private counselling agency in Cedar Falls, Iowa	14-15
SEX STEREOTYPING IN TEXTBOOKS -- Katherine Hurley, President of State Board of Education in Alaska; Jean Baker Kennedy, Project Director of Equal Rights Project	15-16
NEW TEXTBOOKS - ARE THEY NECESSARY -- Christina Simpson, Supervisor of Research and Information, Scott Forsman Publishing Company; Cathy Salsbury, Coordinator of the Pilot Project on Sex Role Stereotyping, Amherst Public Schools	17-19

WOMEN IN EDUCATION

PART II

BLAIR: From National Public Radio, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

FAIRFAX: The school system is a nerve of what society's been in general. There is sexism in a lot of places -- in the courts, in the military, anything else -- the school system is no different.

KAPLAN: The schools could be one of the more important actors in social change in this country, but they have not taken that role.

FAIRFAX: Sex doesn't play a role, it's your qualifications that are most important.

KAPLAN: Unless one is consciously thinking about the importance of encouraging girls, somehow they get left behind. And the price that they're paying is their creativity, their imagination, their ability to reason.

MAN: Females have been systematically kept down, and materials in the curriculum have been rampant with sexism in the same way that this country has been working itself through racism.

* * *

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair, and those are some of the people you will be meeting in a few minutes, because today we are talking about women in education. David Ensor is sitting in for John Merrow, who is on assignment. David?

ENSOR: Thanks, Wendy. You know, teaching used to be a woman's field, like nursing. But, after World War II, men came into education in big numbers. In 1928, 55% of all elementary school teachers were women, but by 1973, that figure dropped to 23%.

BLAIR: So, it looks as though women are losing ground in education. At least, that's what some people think.

* * *

SEX DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

THOMPSON: Women have a low self concept. A career is incompatible with the role of wife and mother. Women have less ambition than men.

BROWN: Men have been selected from the teaching staff to progress into these higher level jobs, and women have been left behind. Yet, we all know the teaching profession is heavily a majority of women.

THOMPSON: It just wasn't "the kind of feminine thing to do" -- to become an "iron pants" principal.

DERBY: There is some resistance on the party of a good number of communities to consider women equally with men.

MAN: While I am obviously a male, and make no apologies for that, I have made it a specific goal of mine to have affirmative action.

ENSOR: Those people think there's a lot of sex discrimination in education, in employment of women, in sports, and in textbooks.

BLAIR: But, after all, education is part of the whole society, and there are signs that the "women's movement" at this point is suffering some real reversals. The debate continues, for instance, as to whether working mothers can be "good mothers."

ENSOR: The Equal Rights Amendment has yet to be ratified, and the Total Woman is a best seller. It says that women are happiest when they are subservient to their husbands. And, there are other signs.

BLAIR: In fact, a new study by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, charges the television industry with "perpetuating racial and sexual stereotypes -- Mary Tyler Moore and 'Police Woman' notwithstanding."

ENSOR: The report's called "Window-Dressing:Women and Minorities on TV." It says the TV world show man as the one's in charge, older, more serious and more likely to hold prestigous jobs.

BLAIR: Women are shown as younger, family bound, without any discernible occupation, and more often in comic roles.

ENSOR: Three prominent educators say television may be slow to change, but schools are even slower. John Merrow talked with Bernice Sandler of the Women's Project of the American Association of Colleges, Arvonne Fraser, former director of the Women's Equity Action League and now with the U.S. State Department, and Clelia Steele of the Project on Equal Education Rights of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

* * *

SEX BIAS IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

MERROW: I want to raise the possibility that maybe the textbooks, and maybe even the stuff that goes on in school isn't really all that important.

FRASER: Well, we ought to look at what happens on TV, because those kids spend a lot more time with TV.

MERROW: What do they see on TV? You all watch it.

FRASER: Well, they're beginning to see -- I did a little study -- some different messages, outside of violence, which scares me, but they are beginning to see women in some different roles.

MERROW: Like what, Ms. Fraser? What have you been watching?

FRASER: What have I been watching? Occasionally, you see a woman judge, and women policemen, or police person. I think it's sure changing a lot more than the textbook, let me put it this way.

SANDLER: Women need to know, and men need to know this too, is that most

women are going to be on their own for a part of their lives. I've checked some other figures. If you look at 100 typical American women, 21 years of age, 6 of them will never marry, so they're going to be on their own. Of the 94 who do marry, 33 will see their first marriage end in divorce, so they're going to have to work at some point. Of the 61 who stay married, 46 of them are going to outlive their husbands. That means 85 of 100 women are going to be on their own!

FRASER: And they're all going to marry later, so they're going to have a working situation before . . .

SANDLER: . . . which is very different from what you and I grew up under.

MERROW: Maybe what the school should be doing then is using those figures and saying to women "Look, this is what your life's going to be like."

FRASER: Yes. I think we've got to start telling girls when they're very small what they're life is going to be like.

STEELE: I don't think our schools as institutions are changing fast enough! The rate of change in our society is accelerating and from what I have seen of elementary and secondary schools, those institutions are not keeping up with that change. Things are getting worse for women in elementary and secondary school administration rather than better. They are falling back, rather than making gains.

SANDLER: The percentage of male principals in elementary schools has been increasing substantially; and way out of proportion to the number of men that are actually in the elementary schools teaching.

FRASER: And then, the message that this gives kids, reinforces the whole business, because the kids learn that the male is in charge and the female is someplace else.

BLAIR: Bernice Sandler of the Women's Project of the American Association of Colleges, Arvonne Fraser, former director of the Women's Equity Action League and now with the U.S. State Department, and Clelia Steele of the Project on Equal Education Rights, part of the National Organization for Women (NOW), talking with John Merrow.

* * *

ENSOR: Those women say that 99% of all school superintendents in this country are men.

BLAIR: From the first time our children go to school and meet the principal and all their teachers, they learn the lesson that the male is in charge. But, I talked to one school principal who broke out of the stereotype.

* * *

CATHERINE DERBY

DERBY: I was a classroom teacher for 10 years. I would have to note that

during those years, there was often a "frowning" on "tooting one's horn" or applying. That the typical administrative strategy was to tap one on the shoulder and say "Hey, you'd make a good principal." That tended to be a man who had handled a rough sixth-grade class. The assumption was the same skills were needed for administration; so that during those years, and I'm talking about the 60's, we had many, many men moving from fifth or sixth-grade classroom positions into principalships.

I guess I was a little more aggressive than some women. I applied for the principalship, and I recall rather vividly being spoken to by the then Director of Personnel, questioning as to why I didn't apply for an assistant principalship. My response was that I thought I knew myself pretty well, and that I was not interested. I wanted a principalship. And I've been a principal ever since!

* * *

WHY THERE ARE FEWER WOMEN PRINCIPALS

BLAIR: Catherine Derby is principal of Trevillah Elementary School in Montgomery County, Maryland. I asked her why the great discrepancy between the number of men and women in her profession.

DERBY: The further "up you get" in the hierarchy, from kindergarten through grade 12, the fewer women there are. There are many more women in elementary, it becomes pretty even -- 50-50 -- in the junior high, but by the time you get to the high school, I would hunch there are about 70-80% men.

There has been until the fairly recent past, a way of getting to the high school principalship. I don't think it's typical anymore, but in the past one of the stepping stones was having been an industrial arts person, having been a physical education coach, having been a guidance counselor, and in the high school, those jobs were always held by men, so that in most instances the stepping stones weren't there for women. I do think this is changing.

BLAIR: Are there more women, even though there aren't very many, more women than there used to be in administrative positions?

DERBY: The numbers would show that over the last 5 years, there are an increasing number of women in administration. However, one of the things that is not shown in the reports is the nature of the positions women are put in. For instance, each of our 5 associate superintendents, and recall that they make up the Executive Staff, has an administrative assistant. Those positions have gone to women. Now, that is categorized as an administrative position. Perhaps to the outsider it sounds like a "weighty" position. My view of that position is quite different. An administrative assistant is just that. The people in those positions prepare reports, they make phone calls, they set up conferences, they do a number of what I consider less-than-administrative chores. They probably could be done equally as well by a good executive secretary.

EISOR: Catherine Derby, Principal of the Trevillah Elementary School in Montgomery County, Maryland. Derby's career choice is slightly unusual. Only about one in five elementary school principals are women. However, the picture's a lot diff(ent at the high school level. It's worse!

BLAIR: That's right, David. In 1972, a survey by the National Education

Association showed only 1.4% of all high school principals are female.

* * *

DR. SCOTT THOMPSON

THOMPSON: There are fewer high school principals, and I believe fewer elementary school principals and junior high school principals that are women today than there were 10 years ago. Now there was one study conducted in New York State that showed that in 1957 there were 26% of the elementary and secondary school principals in New York State were women; whereas by 1974, it had dropped to 13%. In other words, a reduction by half in the last 17 years. Outside of New York City today; today only 1% of the principals in the whole state of New York are women!

BLAIR: Dr. Scott Thompson is Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. That association is currently compiling a profile of America's high school principals. I asked him why more aren't women?

THOMPSON: I think there are 3 or 4 reasons. Number one, there are a large number of men that entered education following World War II. I think that's one reason. There are more men in the field. I do think that there has been prejudice against women in the sense of broader prejudice, not the superintendent sitting down with Miss Jones and saying "In my district there won't be a woman principal." Not in that sense, but in a broader sense that the expectation wasn't there, normally, that a woman would become a principal. . .

BLAIR: . . . in women as much as in men.

THOMPSON: I think that's true, and that women would, if they wanted to go into administration, would become an assistant principal in guidance, or a head counselor, or director of student activities. Again, in kind of the service or helping profession side of it, and not the person who is charge of the budget, or discipline. It just wasn't "the kind of feminine thing to do," to become an "iron pants" principal. It's a cultural determined role in this country -- the principal being a man.

One interesting study on the status of women senior high school principals in the United States was conducted by Dr. Eleanor Baron at the University of Pittsburgh in 1976. She found that there are fewer women principals, senior high school principals, in 1976 than there were in 1955. She didn't give a precise number, but she said that there were a number of opinions expressed that were quite interesting. For instance, women principals agreed with these statements: "Men and women prefer working for men." Women principals also agreed with this statement: "Job relocation is difficult for women;" with this statement: "There is a lack of qualified women for administrative positions;" "Women are frequently by-passed for jobs;" "There is a negative bias towards women in authority;" and finally, "Employers tend to discriminate against women."

Women principals, however, disagreed with these statements: "Women have a low self concept;" "A career is incompatible with the role of wife and mother;" "Women have less ambition than men;" and the final statement they disagreed with was "Men are better administrators."

ENSOR: Dr. Scott Thompson, Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. What he's saying, is that sex discrimination is still around.

CINDY BROWN TALKS ABOUT TITLE IX

BLAIR: And yet, it's illegal in education. Title IX of the 1972 Federal Education Amendments says: "No person shall be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in education on the basis of sex."

ENSOR: Feminists say that enforcement of Title IX is so scarce that it really means nothing! In fact, last week on this program, Dr. Mary Berry, Assistant Secretary for Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, agreed with that. Berry said Title IX must be taken seriously, and that means enforced, if any real changes are to occur.

BLAIR: But, Title IX has enemies. Walter Talbot, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Utah, says the law "goes too far, and the regulations fly in the face of community standards."

ENSOR: Talbot sent letters to every state in the country inviting them to join in a law suit the Utah Board of Public Instruction is working out to fight Title IX.

BLAIR: So far few states have joined Utah, but it's early yet. But others agree with Talbot's opposition to Title IX.

ENSOR: The former President of Yale University, Kingman Brewster is also a critic. And his thoughts represent the objections of many university presidents concerned with over-regulation by the Federal Government. Brewster is currently U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain.

BLAIR: When at Yale, Kingman Brewster objected to the use of federal money as a way of accomplishing objectives that he says have nothing to do with the programs for which the federal dollars are allocated. His views are published in the Spring issue of Learning and The Law, a legal journal.

ENSOR: Still other educators say the problem with Title IX is a lack of clear understanding as to what is required by the law. I talked with one of the people most responsible for enforcement of Title IX. Cindy Brown has spent most of her career, until President Carter was elected, criticizing the Office for Civil Rights at HEW. Now, she's Deputy Director of it. First, I asked her, let's get straight exactly what the law covers.

BROWN: Employment and services issues in all educational institutions, whether it's employment of teachers, or university faculty, or employment of janitorial staff, or lunchroom workers. It covers athletic programs in both elementary and secondary schools and colleges. It covers vocational education and counselling and extracurricular activities. It covers treatment of pregnant girls and married students, financial aid, particularly athletic scholarships. A number of areas which there have been differences in treatment based on sex.

ENSOR: Which do you get more of, complaints from employees of school districts about employment discrimination, or complaints by students about alleged discrimination?

BROWN: We get many more employment complaints than anything else, under Title IX.

ENSOR: The Office for Civil Rights gets an average of 2500 complaints a year. So far, they've had about 1,000 Title IX complaints of which about half are not yet resolved. But the number of sex discrimination charges by women is going up fast. In 1975, there were just over 200 complaints. In 1976,

there were over 400.

As Cindy Brown said, most of the complaints are from school employees, not students. And there's a problem with that. A Michigan Federal Court recently ruled that Title IX doesn't apply to employment, only to students. But the Justice Department's appealing that decision. Brown told me it applies only in eastern Michigan. She said, we're enforcing Title IX for teachers everywhere else.

While girls and women are far more likely to complain to HEW about schools than, say,blacks or chicanos, Cindy Brown says they often don't complain about what she thinks are the most important things.

BROWN: We know that there are categories of girls who are suffering discrimination that aren't complaining. For example, pregnant girls are often times not offered an alternative educational situation to meet their education needs, and in fact are often kicked out of school and denied an education altogether, which of course denies an educational opportunity to the unborn child as well by harming the mother.

ENSOR: Now, when Title IX was passed in 1972, the example everyone used to explain what it would do was "shop" and "home ec." Girls would be allowed and encouraged to take "shop," they said, and boys could take home economics. But, in practice, the most complaints from school girls are about sports.

BROWN: You can't take the profits from a revenue-raising sport and only pour them back into your men's sports.

ENSOR: Why not? If the popularity of watching them play is what's making the money, why shouldn't it be spent on them?

BROWN: In fact, very few so-called revenue-raising sports really are able to totally support themselves from that revenue. They're being subsidized heavily by taxpayers' money. Usually that revenue is subsidizing the amount of the expenditures for that sport, but it's not picking up the whole price. These sports aren't for the benefit of the spectators. To the extent that athletics is offering an education opportunity, you have to look to who the beneficiaries of that educational program are -- and they're the young men and the young women who participate in the sports.

FNSOR: Right now, the Title IX rules about athletics only apply to elementary schools. But they will start being enforced on high schools in 1978, and you can expect to hear a lot more debate when they do.

The law's had two big problems since it was passed. It is controversial in many quarters, and it's been called confusing by school administrators. Superintendents complain that HEW hasn't said exactly what the law means, and that the regulations are confusing. Brown said that a careful reading of them shows that they really are quite clear. But, when I asked her about some specific confusions, she admitted, in each case, they had yet to decide what to require. For example, the "hair length" issue.

BROWN: It really comes up with regard to men and young men, boys, whether there are rules that prohibit them having their hair below a certain length, is a violation of Title IX. We have that policy under review and I'm not sure where we're going to come out.

ENSOR: And, then again, the question of how much money schools can give to off-campus extracurricular activities that segregate boys and girls, such as

fraternities or sororities.

BROWN: That's another policy we have under review.

ENSOR: Aren't there a lot of people out there, including women, who don't like Title IX? Who don't like what it's doing, what it is by law going to require of their schools.

BROWN: Not only Title IX, but you see it in E.R.A., in questions of abortion, in other questions that affect women's status in this country. It's a subject of deep controversy among women themselves. Clearly we don't have a united "women's movement" on these subjects. Now, Title IX is not quite as controversial. I don't think there's controversy dividing American women on the subject of employment. Certainly not on the subject of equal pay for equal work. Employment in certain areas that have been traditional male occupations, maybe there's some women that raise an eyebrow or two about it, but I don't even think there's a lot of controversy about that. There is more controversy about women participating in certain kinds of sports activities, but I don't think there's such a division necessarily among women, as there is division between women and men on the subject of athletics.

Treatment of pregnart girls might be an issue that would potentially divide the women themselves, but I don't think Title IX suffers from divisiveness among women to the extent that an issue, like E.R.A. does, for example.

BLAIR: Cindy Brown, Deputy Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Washington.

ENSOR: If you're interested in understanding what Title IX does, you might want to check out "A Student Guide to Title IX." It's written by Myra Sadker of American University, and it lays out the basic rights of students protected by the law. The students' guide is available at the Resource Center on Sex Roles in Education in Washington.

* * *

DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS

BLAIR: The complaints under Title IX can be roughly divided into two categories, students and teachers. Teachers are concerned about equal employment, but female students are concerned with dress codes and being kept out of certain school activities, especially sports.

ENSOR: A recent study of high schools in California, showed that the average school spent over $14,000 on boys' programs, but only slightly over $3,000 on girls' sports; and the schools provided 21 coaches for males, and only 7 for females.

BLAIR: Last year, the California State Education Association found that boys received 99.9% of the nation's athletic scholarships to colleges. The Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women reports that financial aid to female college athletes is increasing, but is still far behind what male athletes are receiving.

ENSOR: States around the country are grappling with the issue of sports. The Maryland State Department of Education decided to allow girls to try out for any sport, and as a matter of fact, at least one girl showed up for football practice. Reporter David Selvin talked with some Maryland students.

STUDENT: We should have a boys'and girls'team, so that the boys and the girls will have to play together

STUDENT: They're supposed to be the housewives, the ones to cook and sew and that sort of thing. The male is supposed to be the tough and the more physical.

STUDENT: Women put together with men on a football team? I don't think it would be right, because the women would get hurt. The men can take it.

SELVIN: Can you take it? Can you play football?

STUDENT: Uh huh. (laughter) I'm just as good as you are. (laughter)

SELVIN: You hit that ball as well as the guy before you right?

STUDENT: Uh huh.

BLAIR: Girls in Maryland can go out for football, or even wrestling. However, boys will not be able to try out for all the girls' sports, like volleyball or softball.

ENSOR: The reason for the double standard is to protect traditionally female sports. People fear that males, who are usually physically stronger than females, would soon dominate all sports, and females would be left out completely.

BLAIR: Maryland State school officials concede that this new policy may bring complaints of reverse discrimination from boys. David Selvin talked with Maryland Deputy Superintendent of Education, Joseph Shilling, about the difficulty of insuring equal sports opportunities for girls and boys.

SHILLING: The question with me doesn't become one of "Are they physically capable of doing it?" The question becomes one to me of "Should they have the opportunity if they decide they would like to do it."

First of all, I think if we did not adhere to the principles of Title IX and the principles of the Equal Rights Amendment, we would be morally wrong. That's the first thing. Secondly, I would anticipate that some folks would start taking us to court to make sure that we began to implement the principles behind those two things.

SELVIN: What are going to be the results of these changes that you are now implementing, say in 20 years? Do you think, perhaps, down the road somewhere we'll see a change in the kinds of sports that are popular, that maybe infusing women into the athletic programs in high school and in grade school will change the nature of sports?

SHILLING: The traditional kinds of activities that we have seen in the last 20 to 40 years, we will continue to see in the next 20 to 40 years, but we may see different kinds of activity. For example, I would expect that activities of the gymnastic nature would become increasingly popular as the years go on.

SELVIN: Do you think someday, maybe, we'll see women in the National Football League?

SHILLING: I don't know. There are some people who question if some day we'll even see the National Football League.

ENSOR: Joseph Shilling, Deputy Superintendent of Education for the State of Maryland.

* * *

ENSOR: Reporter David Selvin also spoke with Margo Polivy, one of the people who spoke against Maryland's idea of opening up all sports to males and females. Margo Polivy is a lawyer, who represents the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. She thinks banning sex discrimination in sports is a pretty tricky activity.

POLIVY: There are some areas in which you run into something which I call "equality with a vengeance," which amounts to a rather disturbing element that says: "Well, if women want equality, we're going to give it to them good!", which amounts to not giving them equality at all and perhaps cutting out opportunities. It's a reaction, I think,that hopefully a minority of administrators have had; that is, in effect, to say that if you were going to press for equal opportunity for women, we are going to distort the law so that you wind up with less opportunity. If you become aggressive about it in demanding your rights, we're simply going to see to it that you have fewer rights.

Athletics appears to be a different kind of area than work roles, employment considerations, and the courts recognize this. All of the courts that have ruled on the 14th Amendment connotations in school athletic programs have acknowledged that there is a difference in present performance levels. Whether that difference is caused by the fact that you have an institution that has traditionally treated boys and girls differently, or whether there is a physiological basis that is inherent in the nature of the sexes, I don't think anybody can tell you what proportion is what. We have never had a non-discriminatory athletic program for girls. So, I don't think anyone would be foolish enough to say that it's two parts this, or one part that. We don't know. But, we do know that right now, if you simply merge athletic teams on a competitive level, that perhaps the top 1 or 2% of your female students will be able to compete with your male students. That cuts down opportunity.

* * *

SELVIN: Have you ever played football with a woman before? (laughter)

STUDENT: Touch football, but not tackle.

SELVIN: Do any of you see any kinds of problems that could result from having girls and boys, men and women trying out for the same teams?

STUDENT: Well, girls cry a lot.

SELVIN: That doesn't make them ineligible to play though, right?

STUDENT: No.

* * *

BLAIR: That report on Maryland's new policy on sports for women from reporter David Selvin.

ENSOR: You're listening to National Public Radio's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. I'm David Ensor.

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair, and right now, we're examining sex discrimination in education.

* * *

SEXIST ATTITUDES AND THEIR EFFECT ON CHILDREN

ENSOR: For the most part, to change the role of women in athletics, you have to change the rules about who is eligible. But it's not that easy in other areas of education. Our view of the role of men and women, girls and boys is very firmly in place at an early age, usually before children get to school.

BLAIR: Most classroom teachers, especially in elementary school, are women, and at least one researcher says, that works a hardship on boys in the room.

ENSOR: Dr. R. C. Bradley, an education and psychology professor at North Texas State University says school is "too much of a woman's world governed by women's values, rules and standards."

BLAIR: The result, according to Dr. Bradly, is that boys are robbed of their feelings of masculinity, self-worth and esteem. Bradly says, women teachers prefer little girls, because little girls behave themselves.

ENSOR: In fact, another professor both agrees and disagrees with Dr. Bradly's points, but she comes to a different conclusion. She's Dr. Alexandra Kaplan, a psychologist in Amherst, Massachusetts. Reporter Tom Looker asked Dr. Kaplan how boys and girls differ in their relationship to teachers.

DR. ALEXANDRA KAPLAN

KAPLAN: They both have problems. In some ways, however, I would argue that the girls suffer more than the boys. The girls' problem is much more insidious, because in the grade school years it looks like they're doing fine. In almost every field, girls excell over boys, grade-wise, deportment wise, so that they are being reinforced and rewarded and seem to be doing better. But, it turns out, if you look at a longer range, that they're paying a very serious price for that. The price that they're paying is their creativity, their imagination, their ability to reason; because what begins to happen is that they are rewarded for being good, for coloring between the lines for turning in a paper that's neat -- "You didn't write off the edge, Susie, that's wonderful!" So that while the girls look like they're doing better, they are really paying a price of their own self-development, and they begin to pay the toll of that in high school, and certainly by college and later years. Their intellectual strivings are thwarted and I think it's fairly clear that this begins back in those grade school years when the best thing to be is "proper" and they know how.

Boys pay much more of a price at the time. Through the grade school years, boys, for example, are referred to out-patient mental health clinics 4 to 1 over girls; boys have the majority of stuttering problems, reading problems, you can go on and on, as well as being behind the girls in almost every subject, especially the more verbally related ones. Boys, then do begin to catch up during the high school years, and certainly by the end

of the high school years, surpass the girls at almost every skill, perhaps, but the more verbal; certainly the science, mathematics, and so on.

And that's the real problem, that sex differences really only work in one direction. It's not just that we respect the differences, if there were such between the sexes. It's that we use those differences in a very discriminatory way and consistently against the achievement of girls.

ENSOR: Dr. Alexandra Kaplan, a psychologist talking with reporter Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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ENSOR So children receive messages in the classroom that reinforce their sex roles. But what about before school.

BLAIR: Feminists say the sex stereotypes often appear in things as innocent as "nursery rhymes."

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SEX STEREOTYPING IN NURSERY RHYMES

BALIK: Stories like "Snow White" and "Cinderella",from a very early age, encourage little girls that what they need to do is be pretty and grow up and marry "Prince Charming."

BLAIR: Mary Balik teaches in an alternative school. She talked about nursery rhymes and sex stereotypes with reporter Nancy York in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

BALIK: "Little Bo-Peep" and "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and most of those they get into some kind of trouble and they cry, and even though it seems like those are just fun little ways to teach children words, we're also teaching them attitudes. It's a real unfair portrayal of what women are like. Fither we are princesses who are blonde and beautiful, or we're ugly witches and step-mothers.

YORK: What's the reaction of the children when you reverse the roles in the nursery rhymes.

BALIK: Lots of different reactions. It's incredible how sexist 4 year-old boys can be, and some of them are really upset and irate that the characters are girls. It's also incredible how sexist little girls can be at age 4, and they want to characters to be male. If they haven't heard the story before, it's completely irrelevant to them, if the characters have been changed. Often times we act the stories out and, say for example,in "Goldilocks and The Three Bears" Goldilocks is the main character, although some people really get into moralizing about what happens when you go into a house that doesn't belong to you. But, nevertheless, lots of times when I have children act that story out, the boys want to be Goldilocks, because, of course, she's the main character. Other boys want to be Papa Bear, because he's the most loud and demonstrative. Very few boys want to be Mama Bear; and it's also true that very few girls want to be Papa Bear. One of the ways that I like to alleviate that whole role situation is to refer to The Bears as the "big bear,""the middle-sized bear" and the "wee-baby bear." So, I'm hoping that children won't automatically lock into what the big bear does, and what the little bear does, and what the middle-sized bear does. It gives them more freedom to be the great big

bear, and has nothing to do with which sex they are.

BLAIR: Alternative school teacher, Mary Balik, talking with Nancy York of Station KCCK in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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MARCIA GUTTENTAG AND UNDOING SEX STEREOTYPES

ENSOR: Nursery rhymes are only one small part of a young child's life. Surely, parents who wish to can teach their children that women and men are equal and should have the same opportunities.

BLAIR: Not necessarily, according to author, Marcia Guttentag, a professor at Harvard. Guttentag co-authored a book called Undoing Sex Stereotypes.

GUTTENTAG: We found that even by the age of 4, the family background of the child, that is the ethnic background, and whether the parents worked or not, whether the mother was a working mother, made no difference whatever --none -- in the child's ideas about the stereotypes. The stereotypes that every child knew, the masculine and feminine stereotypes, were the stereotypes which one sees on television and which one hears in the culture generally. So, what that means is, is that the power of the family situation is very much less than the power of the overall culture, as expressed through TV and through what peers say.

BLAIR: Marcia Guttentag's book, Undoing Sex Stereotypes, records a research project which tested several levels of school-age children for sex role prejudices. The children then went through what she calls a de-programming curriculum, and were tested again. Guttentag believes that effective teachers must not only use non-sexist materials, but must also actively work at eradicating sex stereotypes, which limit children's aspirations.

GUTTENTAG: In the study, we had people independently ranking the teachers on their enthusiasm, and how much they used the material. We found that those teachers who were most enthusiastic, who used the material most thoroughly, also showed the greatest amount of change in the children in their classrooms. And, by sheer accident, the top-ranked teacher in the study happened to be a 9th grade teacher, a young woman. In her classroom, the adolescent boys became extremely non-stereotyped. So, what does strong mean, it means that these materials can't be used passively. There has to be a conviction that it is right, that it is just, that people have equal opportunities, and this conviction has to be expressed. This is also true for parents. If you are non-sexist, and it's hard to be in our culture, but if you are a non-sexist parent, you should not rest easy that your children will grow up with non-sexist attitudes. It is not sufficient to think that just by doing nothing about it, your child will absorb your attitudes.I don't want to sound discouraged about this, I only want to indicate that if parents want to do something about it, they should do something active.

BLAIR: Like ripping out the television set! (Laughter)

GUTTENTAG: Or, really, creating a kind of a little non-sexist curriculum project of their own at home. That can be done easily by seeing that certain books are around. Let me give you an example. There is this one little play that children just adore and it's called the play about the "it" child. This is a play written by a fifth grader that is based on a book, I think a story originally written by Lois Gould, about a child who didn't have an identifiable sex. Noboby could figure out what sex it was, therefore, it ran

into all sorts of problems, in the school, and on the playground, and with parents, and in jobs, and children, one, are enormously tickled about playing the "it" child, and also find it very revealing of the amount to which their attitudes toward others and toward themselves are based on ideas about the sex of the other person.

BLAIR: It really matters what sex you are, you find out I bet, if you are an "it" in the play. How does it end?

GUTTENTAG: Happily! (laughter) All the sexist school officials are ashamed, and the "it" child goes merrily on doing all sorts of androgynous things.

ENSOR: Marcia Guttentag, co-author with Helen Bray of a book called Undoing Sex Stereotypes, published by McGraw-Hill.

BLAIR: Androgynous means both male and female in one. Explaining complicated messages about males and females, without going over the heads of children is no easy task. Some of the new children's literature succeeds, but some of it fails. Authors sometimes make the mistake of "beating the point to death", thus ending up with preachy, dull material.

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ANN STUDIVANT-ODWARKA

STUDIVANT-ODWARKA: Here's a book called He-Bear, She-bear, and the point of the whole thing is to prove that being a girl or boy doesn't have much to do with anything except motherhood and fatherhood and beyond that you can do anything. It starts out: "I see her, she sees me, we see that we are he and she. Every single bear we see is a he-bear or a she. Every single bear we see has lots of things to do and be." And then, it goes on. The whole book is stuff like, "You could be a doctor, make folks well. Teach kids to add and spell. Knit a sock. Sew a dress. Paint a picture, what a mess." It just goes on and on about all the things you can do, and then, "So many things to be and do, he-bear, she-bear, me and you."

ALT: Oh my God! And by the time the child reaches the end of the book he or she is asleep. (laughter) Not real scintillating.

STUDIVANT-ODWARKA: It's ridiculous!

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BLAIR: Ann Studivant-Odwarka is owner and director of a private counselling agency in Cedar Falls, Iowa. She talks about some of the new literature for children with reporter Jennifer Alt.

STURDIVANT-ODWARKA: The same thing seems to be happening with sexism as happened with racism, in terms of publishing companies and textbooks. When the push in the 60's came on publishing companies to do something about the fact that their books were all "lily-white", all they did was change the illustrations. They darkened the plates and even left caucasian features on the kids. The same kind of thing seems to be happening now in textbooks,

particularly if you just flip through and look at the illustrations. You'll see some changes. Maybe little girls are wearing slacks now instead of frills and dresses, but . . .

ALT: . . . they're still holding the doll!

STURDIVANT-ODWARKA: Right. . . . they're still doing all of the passive things, standing with their hands behind their back and watching little boys be heroes, and all of that.

ALT: Are there any good examples? Are there any positive things that are coming out?

STURDIVANT-ODWARKA: There are a few things. One good resource is the Feminist Press, Old Westbury, New York. They put out a limited number of children's books, as well as adult reading material. One of my favorites is The Terrible Thing That Happened at Our House, by Marge Blaine. And, what happens is that it's from the little girl's point of view as her mother goes to work. First she describes, "My mother was a real mother before she went to work, . . . everything was calm when we went off to school and she'd say, 'be a nice girl now today.'" And she'd come home for lunch, and mother would be home for lunch, and after supper she would read to her and they would have time to play together and all this. Then, mother decides to go back to science teaching, and all hell breaks loose. Everything in the morning is rushed and goofed up and they have to eat at school, which "always smells like frankfurters and hamburgers." You can just get the image -- yeah, it's true. School cafeterias do smell kind of fishy. And, how there's no time to play after school and it's just a mess. They have to work all the time and moan and groan. Finally, one night, the little girl starts screaming at the dinner table. She's asking for them to pass the milk and nobody's paying attention! So then she just starts yelling, "Can't even get the milk when I want it!" They sit down then and talk about it, and realize that things have been kind of bad. So, they resolve it by deciding to get up a little earlier in the morning so things won't be rushed, and they arranged to eat at the neighbor's house, so they don't have to eat in the school cafeteria, and the whole thing.

A lot of what I would point to as good literature that's coming out now and at the same time non-sexist, has to do with the realities of being a child, and really does not have that thrust of girls and boys.

ENSOR: Ann Sturdivant-Odwarka, director of a counselling agency, and specialist in sex-role stereotyping, talking with reporter Jennifer Alt, Station KHKE/KUNI in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

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SEX STEREOTYPING IN TEXTBOOKS

BLAIR: Are the attitudes of students changing in this country? The Bureau of Labor Statistics says 71% of working women are either self-supporting, or married to men who make less than $10,000 a year. In their lifetimes, most women will work, and they will work because they have to.

ENSOR: But a recent study of the nation's 17 year-olds indicates that 30% feel that a woman's place is in the home. The survey was released by the Education Commission of the States.

BLAIR: The Commission held a meeting recently in New York City. One of the things they discussed, was sex-stereotyping in textbooks. Most educators agreed that changes should be made, but they did not agree on what methods to use. Cathy Lewis talked to several educators at that meeting.

KATHERINE HURLEY

HURLEY: We need to get to textbook publishers and if they are smart, they ought to be re-writing their textbooks.

LEWIS: Katherine Hurley is President of the State Board of Education in Alaska. She is talking about the need for public school textbooks to be without sex or race bias. Many states and local school boards are taking action to insure that instructional material is not discriminatory. The question is, whose responsibility is it to see that the textbooks properly represent women and minorities. Does it rest with the text publishers, the federal government, the state government, or with the local school board and the individual teacher?

The Project on Equal Rights for Women in Education feels that this is a state responsibility. The Equal Rights Project was initiated in 1974 by the Education Commission of the States, or ECS. The Equal Rights Project lobbies specifically for legislation aimed at the attainment of equity for all women in education. They have designed, for example, a model bill, similar to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, for use by state legislatures. The Federal Title IX states that no person shall on the basis of sex be subjected to discrimination or be excluded from participation in any educational program receiving federal financial assistance. The Equal Rights for Women in Education Project says that enforcement of the federal legislation has been inadequate, and feels that a state law would be more effective. They are encouraging states to adopt their model bill which includes an additional section requiring state-wide adoption of public school textbooks. The Equal Rights Project feels that state-approved lists for future textbook purchases will eliminate sexist materials from the schools. Jean Kennedy, the Project Director explained,however, why the textbook section is optional.

KENNEDY: Some states have expressed the feeling that that's coming pretty close to a violation of the First Amendment, by dictating what will be taught in the schools as far as instructional materials. If that is their feeling, they don't have to use that particular section of the law.

LEWIS: In addition to being a possible violation of the First Amendment, other objections have been raised to state-adopted textbooks. Homer Elsroad is Director of Elementary and Secondary Education for ECS. And though he endorses the Equal Rights for Women in Education Project, he does not agree with their proposal.

ELSROAD: The teachers' effectiveness is going to be materially compromised if the"tsar of textbooks" comes in and says you use these materials that I've selected. Secondly, as far as sexist materials are concerned, that just the way the words are written in the book is relatively inconsequential. It's how the teacher uses the stuff. And, unless the teacher's made a part of the thinking process and brought along through the whole thinking process and the teacher is committed to those objectives, not much is going to happen. So it's a simplistic idea to say that somebody will watch the pictures and the words that are on the page, and assume that that's going to make all the difference, it won't.

LEWIS: For National Public Radio, I'm Cathy Lewis

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NEW TEXTBOOKS - ARE THEY NECESSARY?

ENSOR: Changing textbooks is complicated and expensive. Most educators estimate the process of replacing school books takes about 7 years. And, who's responsible for changing them? The publisher? The school?

BLAIR: And, what about the First Amendment, guaranteeing freedom of speech. It could be that well-meaning advocates for women's rights could become burners and censors. And, how can school systems bear the cost of supplementing old textbooks with new non-sexist materials.

ENSOR: Some publishers are trying to change their books. Guidelines for non-sexist materials have come out from some major publishing houses. How damaging is it, to use a word like mankind instead of humankind? Or a heading like "Men in History" instead of "People in History." Maybe it's all "much ado about nothing."

BLAIR: Christina Simpson doesn't think so! She's Superviser of Research and Information at Scott Forsman Publishing Company. Simpson talked with reporter Jackie Eastman Fisher about research on textbooks.

SIMPSON: In one group of students, these were third graders, the children were asked to read sentences with male oriented language: and after each sentence, there were stick figures in various combinations, men and women, alone and together . . .

FISHER: Such as"this purse is man-made,"or, that's a bad sentence, but, "all mankind did such and such"; and then they had to circle the stick figures that illustrated what that sentence said?

SIMPSON: That's right. And, then in the other group, the terms were neutral. What they found was, that, children circled male stick figures only when they were reading sentences with male-oriented terms, 49% to 85% of the time; whereas, when the terms were neutral, the children circled males only 3% to 31% of the time. So, I thought, that was a clear indication that male-oriented language does limit children's thinking to males only.

FISHER: In one study that you mentioned to me, you said that it showed that little girls would more readily identify with a boy central character than vice versa. Why do you suppose this is?

SIMPSON: Boys are much more restricted in their sphere of behavior. In other words it's all right for girls to behave like boys, especially in childhood -- we have a word for it, being a "tomboy" -- but the word for a little boy acting like a girl --"sissy"-- is much more perjorative.

BLAIR: Christina Simpson of Scott Forsman Publishing Company, talking with reporter Jackie Eastman Fisher of KWMU in St. Louis, Missouri.

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ENSOR: So far, we've talked about employment of teachers, textbooks and admitting women to sports.

BLAIR: But, changing all of those areas probably won't accomplish the objective of establishing a non-sexist education. That's the view of Cathy Salsbury of the sex role stereotyping project in Amherst, Massachusetts. Massachusetts has its own law, Chapter 622 that says,"Schools must make an active effort to eliminate sex discrimination." But, Salsbury says progress is slow. She talked with Tom Looker.

CATHY SALISBURY

SALISBURY: It's not like trying to introduce new math into the curriculum. It goes much deeper and affects everyone's life.

LOOKER: As Coordinator of the Pilot Project on Sex Role Stereotyping in the Amherst public schools, Cathy Salisbury organized workshops for teachers and consulted with administrators on everything from co-educational athletics to sexism in math books. But, a former teacher herself, Salsbury was anxious to look beyond the classroom situation to the institutional structures which she believes help perpetuate sex biased education.

SALISBURY: If I took a group of teachers and I do the most wonderful workshops in the world and turn their heads around, and they would go back into their buildings, they would become very discouraged after three or four weeks without the necessary supports to sustain those changes.

LOOKER: The State of Massachusetts, a few years ago, passed a law, Chapter 622 which requires that schools make active efforts to eliminate sex discrimination and sex bias in their classrooms. The legislation was a landmark, of sorts, but so far, the law has been scarcely funded, and therefore, not really enforced. Meanwhile, in Amherst itself, a groups of concerned parents pressured the school administration to create a joint parent-teacher committee to deal with problems of sexism in the schools. Chapter 622 was important to the parents' activities. Joyce Berkman, Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts chairs the Parent-Teacher Sex Role Stereotyping Committee.

JOYCE BERKMAN

BERKMAN: I think the existence of that Chapter created a kind of persuasive power, particularly for indifferent or apathetic teachers.

LOOKER: On the other hand, few other school systems in the state have yet attacked sexism so directly as Amherst. Berkman tells of a State Department of Education conference held last year to discuss Chapter 622, in which Amherst teachers found themselves in the distinct minority.

BERKMAN: Most of the other administrators and teachers who were there were there because it was a state law that they had to come -- these were state regulations requiring them to attend this conference. They had no sincere intention of implementing the regulations; and in fact, mocked many of the workshops as they were in process. But, others were simply indifferent: "Yeah, if it doesn't cost any money, if it doesn't really threaten our athletic budget too much, if it doesn't require us to buy a lot of new books, if we don't have to spend money on teacher training, yeah, we'll try to do what we can do."

LOOKER: So, while the state law was helpful, the reason the Amherst School System moved against sexism when it did, and how it did, was pressure from parents

ENSOR: That report on the Sex Role Stereotyping Project from Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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BLAIR: And that's it for this week's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. If you have views on the changing role of women in education, we hope you'll write to us. We'll give you our address in a minute.

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FAIRFAX: The school system is a nerve of what society's been in general. There is sexism in a lot of places -- in the courts, in the military, anything else -- the school system is no different.

KAPLAN: The schools could be one of the more important actors in social change in this country, but they have not taken that role.

FAIRFAX: Sex doesn't play a role, it's your qualifications that are most important.

KAPLAN: Unless one is consciously thinking about the importance of encouraging girls, somehow they get left behind. And the price that they're paying is their creativity, their imagination, their ability to reason.

MAN: Females have been systematically kept down, and materials in the curriculum have been rampant with sexism in the same way that this country has been working itself through racism.

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ENSOR: Reports for this program came from Jennifer Alt, member station KHKE/KUNI, Cedar Falls, Iowa; Nancy York, KCCK, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Jackie Eastman Fisher of KWMU, St. Louis, Missouri; Cathy Lewis in New York, Tom Looker in Amherst; and David Selvin in Washington.

BLAIR: And special thanks to NPR's David Ensor for sitting in while John Merrow is on assignment.

ENSOR: If you'd like a transcript of our series "WOMEN IN EDUCATION" write National Public Radion -- Education, Washington, D.C. 20036. Ask for Programs 87 and 88.

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and John Merrow. The assistant producer is Katharine Ferguson. Technical assistance by Jim Anderson and Bob Nock.

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair.

ENSOR: I'm David Ensor, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

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MUSIC CREDIT: Ramsey Lewis Trio -- "Barefoot Sunday Blues" -- CADET LP 723